



Hope Through The Resurrection

Easter Sunday Service
March 31, 2013

Speaker: Pastor Sam Viswasam

Key Verse: Matthew 28:1-10 & John 20:19-23

Introduction:

In the villages of Northern India a missionary was preaching in a market place. As he closed, a Muslim gentleman came up and said, "You must admit we have one thing you have not, and it is better than anything you have." The missionary smiled and said, "I should be pleased to hear what it is." The Muslim said, "You know when we go to Mecca we at least find a coffin. But when you Christians go to Jerusalem, which is your Mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave." But the missionary just smiled and said, "That is just the difference. Mohammed is dead; Mohammed is in the coffin. And false systems of religion and philosophy are in their coffins, but Jesus Christ, whose kingdom is to include all nations and kindreds and tribes, is not here; He is risen. And all power in heaven and on earth is given unto Him. That is our hope."

But, let me ask you — **What difference does Easter make?**
Does it really matter?
How does it impact the way you live your life on a

daily basis?

Even people who believe Jesus rose from the grave on the third day sometimes have difficulty articulating its relevancy to their lives.

So whether you are a follower of Christ or are still examining His claims, I want to invite you to travel back with me to that first Easter morning—Resurrection Sunday—when Jesus appeared to his faithful followers and explore the significance of the resurrection and the difference it can make in your life.

Let me read from - **John 20:19-23**

19. On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

20. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

22. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

23. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

So, Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday.

That morning Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:1–18).

But now he appears to all the disciples (the eleven apostles) at once.

Notice three things: the doors are locked; the disciples are frightened; and Jesus comes to them and stands in their midst.

Those three facts tell us three things we can know about how the risen Christ deals with us today.

1. The doors were locked.

Jesus did not have to knock. He did not even have to open the door. He simply was there. And he wasn't a ghost. Look at verse 20: “He showed them his hands and his side.” In another place he said, “Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39).

So he has a physical body. But not exactly like ours: the same, yet different. He was simply there, in spite of the closed doors.

Which means that today in your life, Jesus can go where no one else can go.
He can go where no counselor can go.
He can go where no doctor can go.
He can go where no lover can go.
He can reach you, and reach into you, anywhere and any time.
There is no place where you are, and no depths of personhood that you are
which Jesus can't penetrate.
Jesus' resurrection from the dead fits him to do what no one else can do. There
is no one else like him in the entire universe.

He is alive, and he is the one and only God-Man. What he is capable of
unimaginable things.
And it is a healing wonder to contemplate that all the complex layers of your life,
which neither you nor anyone else can understand, are familiar territory to him.

2. They were afraid.

Verse 19: "The doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the
Jews . . ." Their leader had just been crucified as threat to Caesar. Their fear is
totally understandable. And into that fear Jesus comes.

I suppose I want to draw your attention to this because this is the way I feel the
need of risen, living Jesus most often.
Fear. Fear that I won't be prepared for what I'm expected to do.
Fear that the church won't prosper, or the conference won't be attended, or the
class won't be helped.

Fear that my children will make shipwreck of their faith. Fear that I won't have the
faith to die well. Fear that I might drift into worldliness and uselessness.

And what Jesus is saying in this action is: I come to my own when they are afraid.
I don't wait for them to get their act together.

I don't wait for them to have enough faith to overcome fear. I come to help them
have enough faith to overcome fear.

And I testify after many years of being a Christian, this is still true.

The risen, living Jesus is still doing this. He comes when we cry out to him in our
fear. He helps us. I have called to him a thousand times: "Jesus please help me."
And he has come near with the promise:

"Fear not I am with, be not dismayed, I am your God, I will help you" (Isaiah
41:10).

He will do this for you too, if you receive him into your life for who he really is.

3. Jesus comes to them and stands in their midst.

Verse 19: “. . . the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them.”

The point here is that he came right into the middle of their meeting. He did not come to the edge and call out through the wall and deal with them as a distant deity.

He wasn't playing games with them. He wasn't toying with their faith. He wanted them to see him and know him and believe in him and love him.

That's what he wants for you today. And that's what I want for you today. I want you to experience the living Jesus.

To know him. To have him draw near into your life where no one else can go.

To have him help you in your fear the way no one else can help you.

And to have him come to you — close to you, not calling to you from a distance, but coming right into your midst. That's what I pray happens in this service.

Now Jesus gives us three gifts as the risen Savior. – Three gifts

So that's the way he acts as the risen, living Christ.

Now what does he say ?

And what we see is that in this first appearance to the disciples he says three things.

And these three things turn out to be three gifts to you:

the gift of peace,
the gift of power, and
the gift of purpose.

The opposite of peace is conflict.

The opposite of power is weakness.

The opposite of purpose is aimlessness.

Many, many lives are ruined by conflict, weakness, and aimlessness. Jesus did not come into the world and die and rise again to ruin your life. But to save it.

And what we will see is that he saves us from ruining our lives by becoming himself our peace and our power and our purpose. I am praying that God will do this for you:

Make Jesus your peace. And
Jesus your power. And
Jesus your purpose.

- "Peace Be With You"

So what did he say? Two times he said, "Peace be with you."
On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you."

Before Jesus says anything about power or purpose he wants to establish peace. The order here is really important. The peace that Jesus gives is before and underneath any of our empowered actions or any of our purposeful deeds. We don't initiate peace with Jesus by our actions. He initiates peace with us.

A Peace Accomplished

The peace that Jesus offers the disciples is peace that he accomplished when he died for them on the cross. That's why in verse 20 he says,

"When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side." I am the one who died. I am the one you abandoned. And I am the one who was "pierced for your transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5). And the reason I can offer you peace is because by my blood I have covered all your sins.

If you trust me they won't be held against you. The wrath of God is turned away. That's what Paul meant when he said, "Christ reconciled us both to God through the cross, thereby killing the hostility."

All the hostility between God and us was absorbed on the cross. Here, look at my side and my hands. I made peace with these. Justice was satisfied with these. Peace between you and God (and me) was established with these.

Where Peace Comes in Your Life

So there are four relationships where the crucified and risen Christ brings peace into your life:

1. Peace between us and Christ. That's the first and most obvious meaning: he is standing there among them offering them himself as a friend and helper, not a judge.

2. Peace between us and God (God the Father). That's why God sent him—so that God's justice and wrath could be satisfied another way besides eternal punishment. God makes peace with us by substituting his Son's suffering for our penalty. Now he comes to us as a loving Father.

3. Peace between us and others who are in Christ. To be reconciled to God is to be reconciled to all who are reconciled to God.

No hostility vertically or horizontally. No racism. No ethnocentrism or classism or sexism.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

4. Peace between us and our own souls .

The New Testament letter to the Hebrews says, "The blood of Christ . . . will purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14). O the precious peace of a clear conscience. How many people labor under the misery of a defiled, guilty conscience.

How many times people say - "I cannot forgive myself."

Peace with yourself doesn't mean that you start seeing past sins as desirable.

Peace doesn't mean that past sins cease to be painful. It means they cease to be paralyzing.

The pain may not be taken away immediately, but the penalty is taken away immediately through Christ.

And that makes it possible to heal. And to move on with hope-filled life while you do.

Peace with Jesus. Peace with God the Father. Peace with others in Christ. Peace with ourselves. - It was an amazing achievement.

How Do You Receive This Peace?

And how do you receive this?
Everybody doesn't have it. It's a gift of God.

We receive it. Or we walk away from it. Or better to say: we receive him. Or walk away from him. He is our peace.

If you have the risen, living Christ as your Savior, and Lord, and Treasure, and Friend, you have the peace that he gives — the peace that he is.

“To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

“Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

Jesus offers you that. I offer that on his behalf. It is free. I hope you receive it.

I've spent most of our time on the gift of peace because it is foundational.
If we don't have peace with God we will take all his other gifts and use them to try to make peace.

And it never works. Peace is first. And it is free. Everything else is the effect of peace, not the cause. It is fruit. Peace is the root.
So let me just point in closing to the power and the purpose Jesus gives. Both are mentioned in - verses 21–22,

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” [the purpose]

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” [the power]

Our Central Purpose for Existence

Jesus comes to us and gives us his peace with God. Then he gives us power to do the kinds of things that mere humans can't do — like defeating our own selfishness, and loving other people, and treasuring Christ above all.

And then with that peace and that power he gives us our central purpose for existence: “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

I'm sending you to extend my peace and my light and my truth and my life in the world.

I am going to my Father. But I give you my Spirit. I am the power in you. So go and glorify me in this world. That's our great purpose — in the peace of God, by

the power of God, to do the will of God for the glory of God, and for the good of others.

And if you are puzzled by verse 23, here's what I think it means. It's a good way to end. Jesus says to the disciples: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

What he means is this: When you tell people about what I have done, speaking my word, about my work, in the power of my Spirit, I am the one speaking through you, so that if anyone believes your word, I forgive their sins.

And if any does not believe your words, I don't forgive them. And since you are my voice and my truth, I speak of you forgiving them, and you withholding forgiveness.

Which simply means that right now: what you make of this message from this fallible, sinful, human messenger will decide whether you are forgiven or not. What then can Jesus offer you?

He offers salvation – forgiveness of sin and hope of eternal life

No more death – though you may die one day yet He will raise you again alive- because he is the resurrection and life. – that is future.

What about the present?

He gives you peace

His presence is always with you wherever you are- He will neither leave you nor forsake you

He will watch over you always

He gives you confidence – not fear

He also gives you purpose to live

As an ambassador of Christ, I urge you be reconciled to God: receive as a free gift his peace, his power, his purpose. In the name of Jesus. Amen.